

Message Text

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46

ACTION NEA-06

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FM AMCONSUL KARACHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8782

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L KARACHI 0678

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AF, PK

SUBJECT: PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS: CHARGE OF PAK DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST AFGHAN FREIGHT

REF: KARACHI 0655

1. AFGHAN CONGEN SARBELAND CALLED ON ME TODAY TO MAKE WHAT HE CALLED "INFORMAL PRESENTATION" ON ALLEGED PAKISTAN DISCRIMINATION AGAINST AFGHAN FREIGHT IN KARACHI. HE CHARGED THAT SHIPS ARRIVING LATER WERE BERTHED BEFORE THOSE CARRYING AFGHAN CARGO AND THAT THERE WAS RANK DISCRIMINATION PRACTICED IN ALLOCATION OF RAILROAD WAGONS. (SPECIFICALLY HE MENTIONED 300 WAGONS PER DAY FOR PAKISTANI WHEAT, 30 FOR PAKISTANI FERTILIZER, 30 FOR IRANIAN WHEAT TO BE DELIVERED VIA ZAHEDAN AND SOMETIMES NONE FOR AFGHAN GOODS.) HE REFERRED TO AFGHAN CONCERN (AS DID HIS COMMERCIAL ATTACHE IN REFTEL) ABOUT A SHIPMENT OF ABOUT 10,000 TONS FERTILIZER URGENTLY REQUIRED FOR SPRING SOWING IN AFGHANISTAN WHICH UNLOADED FROM SHIP BUT STUCK IN KARACHI PORT. HE SAID SHIP CARRYING 12,000 TONS SUGAR FOR AFGHANISTAN HAD BEEN DIVERTED BY AFGHAN AUTHORITIES TO IRANIAN PORT BECAUSE OF "EMBARGO" BEING ENFORCED BY PAKISTANI AUTHORITIES. HE DISMISSED OUT OF HAND ANY
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POSSIBILITY THAT DELAYS -- WHICH HAD BEEN GOING ON FOR ABOUT A

MONTH -- MIGHT BE CAUSED BY OVERALL SHORTAGE OF BERTHS AND WAGONS, BUT AGREED THAT CURRENT RAILWAY LABOR PROBLEMS MIGHT MAKE THINGS WORSE FOR EVERYBODY.

2. SARBELAND SAID THAT KARACHI PORT TRUST CHAIRMAN AND ONE OF HIS SUBORDINATES HAD TOLD AFGHAN COMMERCIAL ATTACHE "IN CONFIDENCE" THAT SLOWDOWN ON AFGHAN GOODS SHIPMENT WAS BEING CARRIED OUT ON ORDERS FROM MINISTRY FOREIGN AFFAIRS. SARBELAND SAID "SEVERAL NOTES" HAD BEEN SENT BY AFGHAN CHARGE TO MFA AND HAD RECEIVED EVASIVE REPLIES. HE SAID AFGHAN CHARGE HAD ALSO RAISED MATTER INFORMALLY WITH PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR TO AFGHANISTAN ALI ARSHAD, WHO WAS VISITING ISLAMABAD RECENTLY. SARBELAND HIMSELF RAISED MATTER INFORMALLY WITH FONSEC AGA SHAHI AT RECEPTION WHICH FONSEC GAVE FOR KARACHI CONSULAR CORPS 12 APRIL AND FONSEC PROMISED TO LOOK INTO MATTER AND DISCUSS WITH PRIME MIN BHUTTO.

3. SARBELAND SAID HE WAS RAISING MATTER WITH ME BOTH FOR MY INFORMATION AND BECAUSE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT FELT THAT PAKISTANI POLICY TOWARD AFGHAN HAD HARDENED GREATLY IN WAKE OF BHUTTO VISIT TO US AND, PARTICULARLY, LIFTING OF ARMS EMBARGO. I SAID FIRMLY THAT US DID NOT ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY ASPECT OF PAK-AFGHAN DISPUTE AND HE IMMEDIATELY BACKED OFF, SAYING THAT HE WAS BRINGING MATTER TO MY ATTENTION BECAUSE HE KNEW THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN IT UP WITH EMBASSY KABUL AND THAT OUR DCM HAD DISCUSSED IT WITH AFGHAN CHARGE IN ISLAMABAD. I ASKED HIM IF HE HAD TAKEN MATTER UP WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF ANY OTHER COUNTRY AND HE SAID HE HAD ONLY MENTIONED INFORMALLY TO CHINESE CONGEN AT 12 APRIL RECEPTION THAT CHINESE TECHNICIANS NOW IN KABUL TO WORK ON TEXTILE MILL WERE STYMIED BECAUSE THEIR NEEDED TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT WERE HELD UP IN KARACHI BY PAKISTANI "EMBARGO."

4. IN CLOSING, SARBELAND SAID THAT HE WOULD PERSONALLY TAKE UP MATTER WITH KPT CHAIRMAN IN NEAR FUTURE. HE SUGGESTED THAT I MIGHT TAKE MATTER UP WITH LOCAL PAKISTANI AUTHORITIES, AND I AGAIN REMINDED HIM THAT US HAD NO ROLE TO PLAY IN THIS DISPUTE. IN ANSWER TO MY QUESTION, HE SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD PUBLICIZE ITS COMPLAINT.
TIGER

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